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a lower level wire in a dielectric layer, said lower level wire having a side and a bottom, said lower level wire comprising a lower core conductor and a lower conductive liner, said lower conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said lower level wire, said lower conductive liner having an upper edge having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a top surface, the top surface of said upper edge substantially coplanar with a top surface of said dielectric layer;

an upper level wire having a side and a bottom, said upper level wire comprising an upper core conductor and an upper conductive liner, said upper conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said upper level wire, at least a portion of the bottom of said upper level wire extending below a top surface of said lower wire level; and

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said upper conductive liner in contact with said lower core conductor and also in contact with the inner surface or the outer surface or both the inner surface and the outer surface of said upper edge of said conductive liner in a liner-to-liner contact region.

2. The interconnect structure of claim 1, wherein said lower level wire is formed by a damascene process in a lower level dielectric and said upper level wire is formed by a damascene process in an upper level dielectric.

3. The interconnect structure of claim 1, wherein said upper and lower core conductors are selected from the group consisting of copper, aluminum, aluminum-copper and aluminum-copper-silicon.

4. The interconnect structure of claim 1, wherein said upper and lower conductive liners are selected from the group consisting of tantalum, tantalum nitride, titanium, titanium nitride, tungsten and combinations thereof.

6. The interconnect structure of claim 1, wherein said liner-to liner contact region comprises a first portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on a portion of a first side of said lower level wire under said upper level wire.

7. The interconnect structure of claim 6, wherein said liner-to liner contact region further comprises a second portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on a portion of a second side of said lower level wire under said upper level wire.

8. The interconnect structure of claim 7, wherein said liner-to-liner contact region further comprises a third portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on an end of said lower level wire under said upper level wire.

9. The interconnect structure of claim 2, wherein said first and second dielectrics are selected from the group consisting of silicon oxide, silicon nitride, diamond, fluorine doped silicon oxide, spin on glass, porous silicon oxide, polyimide, polyimide siloxane, polysilsequioxane polymer, benzocyclobutene, paralyene N, paralyene F, polyolefin, poly-naphthalene, amorphous Teflon, SILK™, black diamond, polymer foam, aerogel, air, dielectric gases, a partial vacuum and combinations thereof.

10. (Once amended) An interconnect structure, comprising:

a lower level wire in a dielectric layer, said lower level wire having a side and a bottom, said lower level wire comprising a lower core conductor and a lower conductive liner, said lower conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said lower level wire, said lower conductive liner

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having an upper edge having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a top surface, the top surface of said upper edge substantially coplanar with a top surface of said dielectric layer;

an upper level wire having a side and a bottom and a via integrally formed in the bottom of said upper level wire, said via have a side and a bottom, said upper level wire and said via each comprising an upper core conductor and an upper conductive liner, said upper conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said upper level wire and on the side and bottom of said via, at least a portion of the bottom of said via extending below a top surface of said lower wire level; and

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said upper conductive liner on the bottom of said via in contact with said lower core conductor and also in contact with the inner surface or the outer surface or both the inner surface and the outer surface of said upper edge of said lower conductive liner in a liner-to-liner contact region.

11. The interconnect structure of claim 10, wherein said lower level wire is formed by a damascene or dual damascene process in a lower level dielectric and said upper level wire is formed by a dual-damascene process in an upper level dielectric.

12. The interconnect structure of claim 10, wherein said upper and lower core conductors are selected from the group consisting of copper, aluminum, aluminum-copper and aluminum-copper-silicon.

13. The interconnect structure of claim 10, wherein said upper and lower conductive liners are selected from the group consisting of tantalum, tantalum nitride, titanium, titanium nitride, tungsten and combinations thereof.

15. The interconnect structure of claim 10, wherein said liner-to liner contact region comprises a first portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on a portion of a first side of said lower level wire under said via.

16. The interconnect structure of claim 15, wherein said liner-to liner contact region further comprises a second portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on a portion of a second side of said lower level wire under said via.

17. The interconnect structure of claim 16, wherein said liner-to-liner contact region further comprises a third portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on an end of said lower level wire under said via.

18. The interconnect structure of claim 10, wherein said liner-to liner contact region comprises a first portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on a portion of a first side of said lower level wire under said via and a second portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on a portion of an end of said lower level wire under said via.

19. The interconnect structure of claim 11, wherein said first and second dielectrics are selected from the group consisting of silicon oxide, silicon nitride, diamond, fluorine doped silicon oxide, spin on glass, porous silicon oxide, polyimide, polyimide siloxane, polysilsequioxane polymer, benzocyclobutene, paralyene N, paralyene F, polyolefin, poly-naphthalene, amorphous Teflon, SILK™, black diamond, polymer foam, aerogel, air, dielectric gases, a partial vacuum and combinations thereof.

sub 17) 20. (Once amended) An interconnect structure, comprising:

a lower level wire in a dielectric layer, said lower level wire having a side and a bottom, said lower level wire comprising a lower core conductor and a lower conductive liner, said lower conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said lower level wire, said lower conductive liner having an upper edge having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a top surface, the top surface of said upper edge substantially coplanar with a top surface of said dielectric layer;

an upper level wire having a side and a bottom and an array of vias integrally formed in the bottom of said upper level wire, each via of said array of vias having a side and a bottom, said upper level wire and each via comprising an upper core conductor and an upper conductive liner, said upper conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said upper level wire and on the side and bottom of each via, at least a portion of the bottom each via extending below the top surface of said lower wire level; and

said upper conductive liner on the bottom of each via of a first portion of said array of vias in contact with said lower core conductor and each via of a second portion of said array of vias in contact with said lower core conductor and also in contact with the inner surface or the outer surface or both the inner surface and the outer surface of said upper edge of said lower conductive liner in liner-to-liner contact regions.

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22. The interconnect structure of claim 20, wherein said liner-to liner contact region comprises first portions co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of first sides of said lower level wire under vias of said second portion of said array of vias.

23. The interconnect structure of claim 22, wherein said liner-to liner contact region further comprises second portions co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of second sides of said lower level wire under vias of said second portion of said array of vias.


24. The interconnect structure of claim 23, wherein said liner-to-liner contact region further comprises a third portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on an end of said lower level wire under vias of said second portion of said array of vias.

25. (Once amended) An interconnect structure, comprising:

a lower level wire in a dielectric layer, said lower level wire having a side and a bottom and one or more integral extensions each extension having a side and a bottom and extending laterally from the side of said lower level wire, said lower level wire and extensions comprising a lower core conductor and an lower conductive liner, said lower conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said lower level wire and said extensions, said lower conductive liner having an upper edge having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a top surface, the top surface of said upper edge substantially coplanar with a top surface of said dielectric layer;

an upper level wire having a side and a bottom and an array of vias integrally formed in the bottom of said upper level wire, each via of said array of vias having a side and a bottom, said upper level wire and each via comprising an upper core conductor and an upper conductive liner, said upper conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said upper level wire and on the side and bottom of each via, at least a portion of the bottom each via extending below a top surface of said extensions of said lower wire level; and

said upper conductive liner on the bottom of each said via of a first portion of said array of vias in contact with said lower core conductor of said lower level wire and a second portion of

*Pub 31*  said array of vias in contact with said lower core conductor of said extensions and also in contact with the inner surface or the outer surface or both the inner surface and the outer surface of said upper edge of said lower conductive liner of said extensions in liner-to-liner contact regions.

27. The interconnect structure of claim 25, wherein said liner-to liner contact region comprises first portions co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of first sides of said extensions of said lower level wire under vias of said second portion of said array of vias.

*Claim 1* 28. The interconnect structure of claim 27, wherein said liner-to liner contact region further comprises second portions co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of second sides of said extensions of said lower level wire under vias of said second portion of said array of vias.

29. The interconnect structure of claim 28, wherein said liner-to-liner contact region further comprises a third portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on an end of said lower level wire under vias of said second portion of said array of vias.

30. An interconnect structure, comprising:

a lower level wire having a side and a bottom, said lower level wire comprising a lower core conductor and a lower conductive liner, said lower conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said lower level wire;

one or more dielectric pillars formed in said lower level wire, said lower conductive liner on sides of said dielectric pillars;

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an upper level wire having a side and a bottom, said upper level wire comprising an upper core conductor and an upper conductive liner, said upper conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said upper level wire; and

said upper conductive liner in contact with said lower core conductor and also in contact with said lower conductive liner on the sides of said dielectric pillars in liner-to-liner contact regions.

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31. An interconnect structure, comprising:

a lower level wire having a side and a bottom, said lower level wire comprising a lower core conductor and an lower conductive liner, said lower conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said lower level wire;

one or more dielectric pillars formed in said lower level wire, said lower conductive liner on sides of said dielectric pillars;

an upper level wire having a side and a bottom and one or more vias integrally formed in the bottom of said upper level wire, each via having a side and a bottom, said upper level wire and each via comprising an upper core conductor and an upper conductive liner, said upper conductive liner on the side and the bottom of said upper level wire and on the side and bottom of each via; and

said upper conductive liner on the bottom of at least a portion of said one or more vias in contact with said lower core conductor and at least a portion of said one or more vias in contact with said lower conductive liner on said side of at least a portion of said one or more dielectric pillars in liner-to-liner contact regions.



*sub 31* → 32. The interconnect structure of claim 31, wherein said lower conductive liner on the side of said one or more dielectric pillars includes an upper edge having an inner surface, an outer surface, and a top surface and said upper conductive liner on the bottom of vias of said second portion of said array of vias contact one or more of said inner, outer and top surfaces to form said liner-to-liner contact region.

33. The interconnect structure of claim 31, wherein said liner-to liner contact region comprises first portions co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of first sides of said dielectric pillars under said vias.

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A1* 34. The interconnect structure of claim 33, wherein said liner-to liner contact region further comprises second portions co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of second sides of said dielectric pillars under said vias.

35. The interconnect structure of claim 34, wherein said liner-to-liner contact region further comprises a third portion co-extensive with said lower conductive liner on portions of third sides of said dielectric pillars under said vias.

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#### REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-13, 15-20, 22-25, 27-35 are currently pending. Claims 1, 10, 20 and 25 have been amended. Claims 5, 14, 21 and 26 have been canceled.

The Examiner objected to the drawings, stating: "Figures 1-2B should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to S/N 09/871,833